

Message Text

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43/20

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 MC-02 AID-05 IO-13 /102 W

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R 071355Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7765

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

JQUMZV/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 696

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 1170

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (F O R E . O . , T A G S , A N D S U B J L I N E S)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS

SUBJ: SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA

1. ON APRIL 5 ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR TASSEW DESTA TOLD ME
IN CONFIDENCE THAT THE SOVIET UNION LAST SUMMER
TURNED DOWN A LARGE ETHIOPIAN REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSIS-
TANCE, WHILE RECOMMENDING THAT ETHIOPIA FOR TIME BEING
CONTINUE TO RELY ON US. AMBASSADOR DESTA, WHO WAS
FORMERLY COMMANDER OF THE ETHIOPIAN NAVY, ADDED THAT
THE REQUEST OF THE SOVIETS WAS MADE BY THE PRESENT LEFTIST
LEADERSHIP OF THE DIRG, WHICH WISHES FOR IDEOLOGICAL REASONS
TO MOVE CLOSER TO THE SOVIETS. THE MORE SENIOR
MILITARY COMMANDERS, HOWEVER, ADVISED THEIR YOUNGER AND
MORE LEFTIST COLLEAGUES THAT ETHIOPIAN MILITARY FORCES ARE
TOO DEPENDENT ON U.S. ARMS TO EFFECT SUCH A BASIC
CHANGE PARTICULARLY AT A TIME WHEN SOMALIA IS
THREATENING DJIBOUTI.
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2. DESTA OBSERVED THAT THE LEFTIST OFFICERS WERE QUITE
SHAKEN WHEN THE SOVIET UNION TURNED THEM DOWN. HE
CONTINUED THAT THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A GOOD TIME FOR
THE U.S. TO HAVE MOVED AGAINST THE DIRG ALTHOUGH HE

ADMITTED THAT HE WASN'T SURE JUST WHAT THE U.S. COULD HAVE DONE. HE ADDED THAT THERE IS STILL TIME FOR THE U.S. TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A DETERIORATING ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION BUT WAS GENERALLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE NEXT FEW YEARS IN VIEW OF THE SERIOUS LACK OF LEADERSHIP AROUND WHICH MODERATE FORCES MIGHT RALLY. HE CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS TRULY A SAD TIME IN THE HISTORY OF ETHIOPIA WHEN MANY ETHIOPIANS USUALLY INTENSELY PATRIOTIC ARE HOPING THAT SOMALIA WILL ATTACK DJIBOUTI AND THEREBY BRING ABOUT A WAR WITH ETHIOPIA WHICH SOMALIA WOULD WIN BUT WHICH WOULD THEN GIVE THE MODERATES A CHANCE TO OUST THE LEFT.

3. COMMENT: I HAVE NO WAY OF JUDGING USEFULNESS OF ABOVE INFORMATION BUT HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH THE INTELLIGENCE AND OPENNESS OF DESTA WHO APPEKKS DEEPLY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE CURRENT DRIFT TO THE LEFT IN ETHIOPIA AND WHO ALSO SEEMS TO BE A FRIEND OF U.S. AMBASSADOR DESTA IS A GALLA CHRISTIAN WHO HAS PRESUMABLY BEEN EXILED TO SANA AS AMBASSADOR BECAUSE OF HIS OPPOSITION TO THE PRESENT REGIME.
SCOTES

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JQUMZV KHARTOUM
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